

1- AYERS, BRADLEY EARL

~~SOCHOLZ~~ The WAR That  
NEVER WAS

CIA 4 Cuba: Bay of Pigs

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI  
GLOBE-DEMOCRAT

MORNING - 284,110

WEEKEND - 285,330

SEP 25 1976

# CIA critique

THE WAR THAT NEVER WAS  
By BRADLEY EARL AYERS

(Bobbs-Merrill) \$8.95

Reviewed by HENRY A. CHRISTOPHER

The title of this book mirrors its author's deep sense of frustration, futility and anger stemming from U.S. reluctance to use its resources to loose Fidel Castro from power in Cuba.

It is another in the growing number of "insider's accounts" exposing Central Intelligence Agency activities abroad. Writing nearly 15 years after his experiences, Ayers tells us nothing excitingly new. With minor exceptions, his revelations will be received with no great surprise by those who have kept up in the past year with news stories of CIA's foreign exploits.

As a first-hand view of the Kennedy administration's attempts to unsettle the Castro regime, however, it does reinforce the recent findings of the Senate Committee on Intelligence. It also shows the U.S. violation of the 1962 Khrushchev-Kennedy Agreement under which the U.S. promised to stay clear of military intervention in Cuba. Ayers himself was an Army captain who was clandestinely attached to the CIA for a year and a half (in 1963-64). Posing as a civilian, he was assigned to work in the Florida swamps to train Miami-based exiles in commando operations directed against Communist Cuba. Also of some interest is Ayers' vaguely expressed belief that CIA's anti-Castro efforts were somehow related to the assassination of President Kennedy — something that today people in Washington are talking about again.

Like Philip Agee, who revealed U.S. intelligence secrets in a recent book, Ayers also became disillusioned with the CIA — but for different reasons. Agee found intolerable the fact that CIA operations served to perpetuate the traditional injustices of the masses in Latin America where he had served for 12 years. But Ayers' disaffection sprung from the fact that after President Kennedy's assassination the Johnson administration abruptly adopted a neutral policy towards Cuba and instead gave priority attention to the Vietnam war. Ayers could not accept this policy shift which he calls a betrayal of the cause of freedom and of the Cuban exiles whom President Kennedy earlier promised to help return to their homeland.

IN A PRE-PUBLICATION announcement, the publishers of this book predicted that both the CIA and the Army would be embarrassed by Ayers' revelations. This may well prove to be true for a variety of reasons. Ayers is consistently critical of the CIA personnel he met; frequently characterizing them as undedicated, poorly motivated, bureaucratic and self-indulgent. A self-styled soldier-crusader, he portrays himself as fighting for an honorable and just cause while depicting his CIA colleagues as "just doing a job." He also attacks both Army and CIA personnel he knew for selling out to Johnson's new foreign policy, describing them as willing and anxious to serve in Vietnam only for the sake of promotion and career betterment while "ignoring the cause of freedom" just 90 miles away.

The book is interesting, but it adds little or nothing to our store of knowledge; one wonders why Ayers even bothered to write it. He tells us: "Standing beside my Cuban comrades still, I have chosen to fight with the written word instead of a gun." Still, the romantic, the idealist, Ayers has yet to learn that the Castro revolution is irreversible and that U.S. policy has long been geared to this reality.

(Henry A. Christopher is chairman of the Political Science Department at St. Louis University.)